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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

EUPHEMIAN & PHILOMATHEAN

LITERARY SOCIETIES,

OF

ERSKINE COLLEGE;

AT THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,

AUGUST 8TH, 1855.

BY

SAMUEL MCGOWAN, Esq.

ABBEVILLE, S. C.

DUE WEST,
TELESCOPE OFFICE.

1855.

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EUPHEMIAN HALL, AUG. 8TH, '55.

*Gen. S. McGowan, Dear Sir:—*Having listened with marked interest, to your very appropriate address of to-day, and being unwilling that the noble sentiments therein contained should be confined to a single auditory, we, in the name of the Euphemian Society, respectfully solicit a copy for publication. Hoping that you will accede to our request, with a sincere desire for your future prosperity and happiness, we remain with sentiments of profound respect,

Your most obedient servants.

J. H. YOUNG,
A. J. McQUISTON,
J. S. CRAIG.

ABBEVILLE C. H., S. C., AUG. 9TH, '55.

*Gentlemen:—*I thank you, for your kind expressions, and herewith send a copy of the Address. I thought, when I commenced its preparation, that I had at my command time proportionate to the high sense of the honor conferred by your appointment, but unexpected interruptions occurred. If the production was much better than it is, it would not be worth preservation. But it is like much else that is printed; and for me to withhold it, would, under the usage which prevails, seem to be affectation. Such as it is, gentlemen, it is at your disposal.

With high regard for yourselves personally, and for those whom you represent,

I am, your obedient servant.

S. MCGOWAN.

MESSRS. J. H. YOUNG,
A. J. McQUISTON, } Committee.
J. S. CRAIG.

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ADDRESS.

ON the fourth of July, 1776, the place where we now stand, was on the very verge of civilization in the Province of South Carolina. A short distance hence—at the point where the trail from Ninety-Six to the Keowee crossed the Cherokee boundary—stood a small Indian trading-house, known as Dewett's Corner. Hostilities had then, already, commenced between Great Britain and her Colonies. Fort Moultrie, hastily constructed of spungy logs from its immediate vicinity, and fighting under the famous crescent banner of blue, had already driven the Fleet of Sir PETER PARKER, shattered and defeated, from the harbor of Charleston, and by that heroic achievement had given renown to the Palmetto, and a proud device to the escutcheon of the embryo State. The Cherokee Indians, urged by CAMERON and other British agents, and stimulated by the hope of plunder, and of revenge for all their hoarded wrongs, real and imaginary, had, in violation of recent treaties, seized the tomahawk, crossed the border near this place, and rushed, with savage ferocity, upon the exposed inhabitants of the frontier. Captain AARON SMITH's family on Little River, consisting of fifteen souls, male and female, white and black, had all been massacred, except two sons; one of these had escaped to White

Hall, and alarmed that settlement, whilst the other, hard pressed by barbarians thirsting for his blood, had succeeded in reaching the residence of Mr. FRANCIS SALVADOR on Coranaca Creek, and there, holding up the bleeding stumps of his mutilated hands, told the fearful tale of slaughter, and roused the scattered settlers of that vicinity to rally, for the double purpose, of avenging their murdered neighbors, and of protecting their own fire-sides and families.

This irruption of the Indians upon the Western border of the Province, was doubtless intended to be simultaneous with the attack on Charleston and the Sea-board, and on the morning of the day rendered ever memorable by the declaration of American Independence, Dewett's Corner was deserted—Major DOWNES, and the people of Rabun's Creek were besieged by the Cherokees at Langly's Fort on the Saluda—and Col. WILLIAMSON and Mr. SALVADOR, with a muster of militia hastily collected, and still collecting, lay at HOLMES' field on Hogskin Creek. This little army of militia, soon afterwards crossed the border, and took and burnt most of the lower Towns, among which was Esseneca, where the lamented SALVADOR fell and was brutally scalped by the ruthless enemy. It also penetrated into the middle settlements and valleys, and inflicted upon the whole nation of Cherokees, including the Over-hills, such signal chastisement for their treachery and bloody foray, that they sued for peace, and concluded a treaty with South Carolina and Georgia, by which they acknowledged themselves vanquished, and ceded to South Carolina all the territory lying on this side of the Oconee mountain. This

treaty was made by the representatives of the different parties, in May 1777, and, as if by a sort of poetical justice, was signed at Dewett's Corner, near the place where the war had been commenced by indiscriminate massacre and midnight murder.

Seventy-nine years have passed and gone, and how different the scene ! How great the change that has taken place ! It is almost beyond the power of imagination to compass it. After the Declaration of Independence, that struggle, in which our ancestors had been engaged, was no longer a petty defence against Indian depredations, or merely the resentful rebellion of revolted subjects ; but it became a great war of deliberate aim and settled purpose ; and in that character, notwithstanding many reverses, especially in South Carolina, it was waged heroically, until our National Independence was formally acknowledged by the proudest power on the face of the earth, and recorded for the purposes of history in the treaty of Paris 1783.

Having attained their Independence, our ancestors established for themselves, and posterity, a government, which, after it has been tried for three quarters of a century, and has been severely tested in every part by experience, we may now venture to say, was the result of wisdom inspired from above. They established a government, which, properly administered, affords an asylum of political and religious liberty for the oppressed of every nation and creed. They established a republican government, the fundamental ideas of which are—that the people are the source of all power—that government is established, not for the

elevation of the governors, but for the welfare of the governed, and that it ought to be administered by agents chosen by the people from amongst themselves. They did not, however, establish an unmitigated democracy,—having no law besides the present will of the rolling masses,—fitful, unsteady, changeable, and sometimes turbulent ;—but a constitutional, representative, republican government, which has certain limits assigned to it by the fundamental law, and under which the representative acts for his constituents, subject only to his own sense of right, and his responsibility to them at stated periods through the ballot box.

Under the benign operation of this system of government, a mighty change has been produced. The stirring scenes of 1776 have given place to those of quietness and peace. This place, which was a mere post on the bloody border between the possessions of the white man and the Indian, is now within the interior of a cultivated and enlightened State—a flourishing village of a rich and refined District, enjoying intercourse with adjoining Districts of like character.—The Cherokee, like the brothers of his race—the most unfortunate, and, perhaps, the most remarkable of the races of men—has receded still further over the mountains, yielding a portion of his fair domain at each successive struggle with the white man, until his title to the whole region within this State has been entirely extinguished, and the places which here knew him shall know him no more forever. His bloody hunting grounds have become peaceful and cultivated fields ; towns, villages, and country seats, now cover the region where primeval forests once stood, in which

the red man roamed at his will, and, as his humor prompted, made war upon his enemies, or, in whispering accents, "wooed his dusky bride." Near the spot where a precarious traffic with Indians was carried on amidst riot and violence, now stand the stately walls of this College, whose inmates are enabled, in the most perfect safety and tranquility, to devote themselves to the peaceful pursuits of science and literature.

It could not surely have been anticipated, in the year 1725, by those godly men, RALPH and EBENEZER ERSKINE, who seceded from the Scottish Establishment, and whose sentiments have been adopted, and acted upon by the Free Church of Scotland, that in the Western Continent, far beyond the reach of persecution for non-conformity, in that remote region then in the undisturbed possession of the wild Indian, there would arise a literary institution, at once the cause and the evidence of a progressive civilization, and bearing, in honor of themselves, the distinguished name of "ERSKINE."

How has this change been produced? Shall we say, that some political Prospero has waved his magic wand—that some spirit Ariel has shipwrecked thousands on our shores, bound for other lands—shall we say that some Eastern Despot, with myriads of slaves and millions of treasure, has exercised his caprice?—or shall we not rather say, in the spirit of soberness and truth, that our republican institutions, based upon popular education, have, under the blessings of Heaven, wrought this wonderful change. The same influences have called into existence, in addition to the

original revolutionary States, a galaxy of new ones, which, in common with the old thirteen, are checkered with Railroads where mountains rose, and dotted with cities and blessed by colleges where lately Nature reigned in wildness unreclaimed.

What a commanding stand-point does this place afford, for either a retrospect of the past, or a survey, by anticipation, of the hopes of the future? In contemplating the mighty change which has taken place, we are struck with the apparent fulfilment of the remarkable prophecy of Bishop BERKELEY, made as far back as the year 1728, under enthusiasm produced by his favorite idea of establishing a College in the Bermuda Islands, which, in his imagination, he had already erected and named "St. Pauls." With the benevolence of a Philanthropist, the extacy of a Poet and the rapt vision of a Prophet, he exclaimed :

The muse, disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame.

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of Empire and of Arts.
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Westward the course of empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past.
A fifth shall close the drama with the day,—
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Notwithstanding the good Bishop of Cloyne never realized his own bright anticipations, but met with disappointment and difficulties, and was finally balked in his benevolent project of establishing a College in the Bermudas; yet, we can say with truth that his

prophecies, like those of the ill-fated CASSANDRA, though not credited at the time, were true; and that his remarkable vision of the future has been already, at least in part, realized. We have a land, a distant land in the West, which, undoubtedly, has produced "Subjects worthy fame;" we have had here, "The rise of Empire and of Arts," and we have had, also, "The good and great—the wisest heads and noblest hearts;" and the very interesting question now arises, shall we continue to accomplish the prediction, and to act in such a manner as to secure, in reference to ourselves, the record of history that "Time's noblest offspring is the last?"

With the beginning we have already made, and the peculiar felicity of our condition in many respects, it will depend chiefly upon ourselves, whether the glowing vision shall be entirely realized, or whether, abusing the greatest blessings, and neglecting the finest opportunities ever vouchsafed to any people, we shall ingloriously leave for others to accomplish that which destiny seems to have intended for us. We are all certainly desirous that what was poetic speculation may become historical fact. Would it not be a source of infinite pleasure, if, possessing the gift of prophecy, we could penetrate the darkness which rests upon the future, and see as great and happy a change wrought in our condition by the next half century, as has been produced by the last? That pleasure would, perhaps, arise in part from the mere magnificence of the scene, which, in that case, would burst upon the sight—a scene infinitely surpassing anything which has ever been presented upon earth;

but this would only be the pleasure which is derived from the contemplation of a beautiful picture, in comparison with the rapture and unutterable gratitude with which such a scene would inspire the patriot thus informed that Heaven had in store for his country so much happiness and prosperity.

In view, then, of our great progress in the past, and our high hopes of the future—in view of the glorious mission set before us, and of the high destiny which we may fairly suppose is intended for us as a people—it becomes every man of us to do his duty—his duty to himself, his duty to others, and his duty to his country. That we may be enabled to discharge our duty, it is necessary to understand what it is; and for this purpose it is well now and then to recur to first principles—to glance at the point from which we started—to observe the direction in which we are tending—to examine how far we have advanced, and the causes of such advancement—wherein we have been retarded, and the reasons why; and to draw from such views useful and practical lessons for our improvement and future guidance. This occasion is, perhaps, a proper one for us to take such a reckoning—to examine the auspices, and interrogate the oracles as to our reasonable hopes and destiny, and especially to recall, if possible, our whole duty touching the great subject of education.

The first great king of Macedon, when he had attained to such grandeur that he was supposed to be in danger of being carried away by the adulation of sycophants and flatterers, and of forgetting who and what he was, had the wisdom to keep a servant in his

employment, whose duty it was to proclaim in his hearing, every day, before he gave audience: "Philip, remember thou art mortal." In the same way there are some fundamental truths, which, though they are neither new nor striking, it is important to proclaim before the people every day. Among these, there is, perhaps, none so important as, that the people under our form of popular government must be educated. This is not merely a trite common place, but a truth as important as our welfare, and as abiding as the everlasting hills. Volumes might be written, in fact have been written, upon the subject, but it is a theme too vast for an occasion like the present; indeed, it is unnecessary to enlarge upon a matter so obvious, before an audience so intelligent as the one here assembled. We will, therefore, content ourselves with assuming the truth of the proposition, and merely stating that it is a truth so vitally important that it should be proclaimed from the house-tops, not only every day, but, if possible, every hour in the day. The very College-bells, every time they call to the lecture room, or recitation, should peal out in tones unmistakeable, that our welfare, nay, our very existence in a state of freedom, depends upon the education of the people.

It is especially important that this cardinal truth should be kept constantly before the people in days of great national wealth, prosperity, and glory, such as, under Heaven, it is our good fortune to enjoy at this time. These are the circumstances, however desirable in themselves, which usually first dement nations as well as individuals, and insidiously plant the

seeds of decay and death. It was amidst the fumes of incense, and the soft whisperings of flattery—it was when Macedonia's king had become the master of Greece, and there was danger of his losing sight of truth, amidst the illusions of prosperity, and the resplendent glories of unprecedented success, that it was thought necessary to have proclaimed every day, in the hearing of the great PHILIP, an admonition so plain and obvious, as that which teaches, that all men, without respect to condition, are born to die.

Assuming, then, the necessity of popular education, it is worth our while to enquire how it can be most certainly secured. In our country, it may be taken as established, that the people must be educated mainly by their own voluntary efforts. In this respect we differ widely from some of the ancients. It was a favorite idea of antiquity, that the government was the proprietor of the children of the citizen, and that they should be taken from their parents, and brought up in common at the public expense. This idea is said to have been carried out by the Persians; and we are informed by a writer of ancient history, that the “Spartan Lawgiver, LYCURGUS, looked upon the education of youth as the greatest and most important object of a Legislator's care. His grand principle was, that children belonged more to the State, than to their parents, and, therefore, he would not have them brought up according to the humors and caprice of the parents, but would have the State entrusted with the care of their education, in order to have them formed upon fixed and uniform principles, which might inspire them betimes with the love

of their country and of virtue." It does not appear that any provision whatever was made for the education of females; these, the best portion of our kind, were not intended to be soldiers, and, therefore, they did not come within the care of the State.

This ancient method of educating the "children of the commonwealth," as they were called,—ignoring the affectionate tenderness of parental authority, and the sweet and holy influences of the hearth-stone and of home—was well calculated to make hardy men, and stern soldiers, but not good, moral, and refined citizens, such as are produced by modern education. This Spartan system was in strict accordance with the iron spirit of heathen antiquity, when the very gods were valued according to their prowess in arms, and the beau ideal of physical power, Jupiter Tonans, was the highest object of human adoration. This was the discipline which produced that boy, who regarded the disclosure, through physical weakness, of his theft of a fox, as infinitely more reprehensible than the theft itself; but, at the same time, inspired that spirit which hurled Sparta with irresistible power upon her enemies, and even from the tomb of her heroes spoke in the epitaph at Thermopylæ, "Stranger, tell it at Lacedemon, that we died here in obedience to her laws."

Important as it is that our people should be educated, yet it is not the policy of our government to take the children of the citizen and educate them in common at the public expense, or even to require them by law to educate themselves. Although popular intelligence is more necessary for us, than any

other people, because of the peculiarity of our political institutions; yet our government shrinks from the fearful task of taking the custody of youth, and of assuming the responsibility of their education. It is contrary to the spirit of our people, as well as to the genius of our institutions, to confer upon government, powers, so unnecessary and so liable in their execution to cruel perversion and oppressive abuse. One of our political maxims is, that "that government is best which governs least." The people now, understanding the sources of power, are unwilling to commit to government, offices, which by their own individual exertions, and without any costly, and oppressive instrumentality, they can better perform themselves. The spirit of our people is so free, that they would not consent to receive even the boon of education upon compulsion. Liberty is so dear, that they will not deprive themselves of it, even to secure that which is necessary for its preservation. The very essence of liberty is the largest personal free agency consistent with wise government, and the peace and good order of society. If such a system for educating the people as the Spartan, were not inconsistent with the genius of our institutions, it would be utterly impracticable here, from the extent of our country, and the condition of our society. A small State of antiquity, without a knowledge of the art of printing, and without the christian religion, might collect all her male children and instruct them in arms and the use of black broth and iron money, but such an effort would be utterly futile and unwise in a large State, and under a modern civilization.

Our government, trusting to the auxiliary discipline of a family, leaves the education of youth mainly to voluntary efforts; it proceeds upon the assumption that the affection and intelligence of parents may be trusted in reference to the education of their own children. Parents are left themselves to perceive that it is the highest interest, as well as the first duty, of every citizen to be educated. The general policy of the State seems to be—after making such contributions to the cause of education as appear to her indispensable—to leave to private exertions the accomplishment of the great purpose in view, to give direction to proper efforts, to encourage the people to a use of their own means, to incite all to the acceptance of the good, but to force none.

Education is, especially, the matter of the people. In respect to it they are both the donors and recipients; they must render this service to themselves by their own exertions, and without the intervention of any direct agency of government. It is, therefore, immensely important to preserve a wholesome public opinion upon this subject. If popular education is necessary, it is of course necessary that the people should be persuaded that it is so, and be induced, if possible, to exert all their efforts in its behalf.

From these considerations it may be useful to go to the fountain head—to speak to the judges themselves—and with a view of inducing earnest and efficient action upon the subject, to suggest to this respectable portion of the people, some of the incentives, motives, and rewards, which ought to influence them in reference to this great subject.

The wise king of Israel, whose experience embraced as large an enjoyment of the good things of this life as ever fell to the lot of humanity, hath said, "wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding." If we look merely to individual happiness and success in this life, there is nothing so important as education. We do not mean by education the mere process of filling the mind with undigested facts, and thereby making it a lumber house, nor even the bare curriculum of a College course; but we mean the drilling of the mind—teaching it to think, and habituating it to think for itself, to analyze, to condense, and to classify. We also mean the cultivation of all the moral qualities, and noble and generous sentiments with which our Creator has endowed us.

The unaided intellect is cold and passive, and like the Telescope gives the mere power of vision. The sentiments and moral qualities are warm and active, and constitute the motive power which gives all its momentum to character. Education in this sense, "*Scientia Cum Moribus Conjuncta*," including the preparation of the mind for original thought, and the cultivation of the whole sentient and moral nature, is all-important to us as individuals, both in respect to things around us here, and to our immortal interests hereafter.

Do you wish to be a happy man? Then, "wisdom is the principal thing." It will greatly contribute to your real pleasures,—it will raise, chasten, and dignify your nature,—it will render you capable of real hap-

piness. Happiness, in one form or another, is the end for which the whole world is striving. This is the goal for which we are all panting and struggling through the dust and heat of the race of life. It is for this the farmer cultivates his fields. It is for this the merchant plows the main. It is for this the professional man and the student "watch the labors of the midnight moon;" and it is for this the soldier dies.

To speak in general terms, we may say that we are susceptible of two kinds of pleasure; the animal and the intellectual. The latter is peculiar to us as rational, intelligent beings; the former we have in common with the lower orders of creation. The physical enjoyments are both short and dangerous. The palate soon becomes disgusted with sweets; the delightful beverage soon loses its zest; the race course and the gambling table soon become irksome; and hence, we see the professed followers of pleasure, (if such things deserve the name) always on the wing—always changing—always anticipating and never realizing—always in the pursuit of pleasure, and yet always discontented and unhappy. These pleasures are not only short, but they are dangerous. From a principle in our nature, frequent gratification of an appetite weakens it, and gives rise to a habit. Gratification carries on this process until the appetite, and of course the pleasure consequent upon its gratification, have entirely gone, and a habit is formed in its stead; to gratify this habit affords no pleasure, but to withhold from it gratification gives positive pain. The physical pleasures therefore, which, when kept within proper limits,

may conduce to our enjoyment, are utterly insufficient of themselves to afford permanent happiness. But the other kind of pleasure of which we are susceptible, the intellectual, is safe, lasting and pure. Lord CHATHAM wrote to his nephew at Cambridge, "Go on, my dear nephew, and drink as deep as you can of these divine springs: The pleasure of the draught is equal at least to the prodigious advantages of it to the heart and morals."

The mind is independent of external circumstances. The man whose intellect is enlightened, and whose moral sentiments have been cultivated, has within himself, and the world cannot take them away, the elements of abiding happiness. To him the sighing zephyr, the singing bird, the odor and beauty of flowers, the tints of the rainbow, the earth itself, and the grand system of which we form a mere atom, all afford pleasure—pleasure in themselves, and further pleasure in the knowledge that they proclaim the wisdom and goodness of their great Creator. Though every thing in life should fail him—though summer friends should fall away from him in the day of adversity, he can still enjoy himself, at least in moralizing upon his condition, thus drawing a pleasure from misfortune itself. Like the exiled Duke and his companions in the forest of Arden, he can say:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
And thus our life exempt from public haunt,
Find tongues in trees—books in the running brook,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

It has been said that "the more ignorance the more

bliss;" but this is a dangerous fallacy, uttered more in the spirit of poetry than of philosophy. Suppose, for a moment, that you could neither read nor write, what would be your feeling? Do you think it would be that of pleasure? Can you realize in imagination the condition of those, who are shut out from all communication with the world by means of letters—who can learn nothing from books—who can not correspond with their fellow men by giving and receiving ideas, except by the simplest language, learned by imitation? What a small compass to bound the operations of the immortal mind! Under such circumstances it would add little to the pleasure of the unfortunate one, to have had his destiny cast amidst all the intellectual splendors of the nineteenth century. It is regarded unlucky for those having weak eyes to be exposed to a flood of light. The owl can see better in the dim flickering of twilight, than in the glare and sunlight of noon-day, which actually inflict upon him pain. It is a poor, tantalizing consolation for those who can neither read nor write, to see the world teeming with books; to see others deriving intelligence from certain mystic characters unknown to them, and the very children learning the history of nations, and deriving from inspired pages a knowledge of the creation, the fall of man, the scheme of redemption, and the whole divine revelation. The unlettered man, in an enlightened community, might be supposed to roam about over the face of the bright earth, as if covered by an impenetrable veil of darkness; or to be fixed in some dark cavern, where the rays of light could never reach him.

Education exalts the mind, and puts us, as it were, upon an eminence—upon a mountain top, thus enlarging our landscape, bringing into view the purling streams, the sweet vales, the waving forests and cultivated fields of the world around. BACON quotes with approbation the remark of the poet: “it is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and see ships tossed upon the sea—a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and see a battle, and the adventures thereof below; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth, and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests in the vale below;” and the great Lord VERULAM himself adds: “certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man’s mind move in Charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of Truth.”

Not to speak of the numerous indirect ways in which education promotes our happiness, by giving the ability to attain intercourse with the good and great, and to succeed in the higher, and more intellectual avocations; it affords directly the purest pleasures of life. Who can over estimate the delight of the mathematician, who first demonstrated the rule in reference to the right-angled-triangle? or of the astronomer in modern times, who, in his closet, by dint of mere science, arrived at the conclusion that there ought to be another planet to make the system complete; and sweeping that part of the heavens with his telescope, where he supposed it ought to be, actually discovered, and, as far as we are concerned, dragged from the abyss of darkness a new and shining

world! What a splendid triumph of science! What exquisite delight it must have afforded the happy discoverer!! Besides the pleasures which intelligence brings with it, there is a positive and substantial enjoyment in the mere exercise of the mind—that superior part of man which assimilates him to the great Creator, and of which even Angels are proud. One of the fallen host, fresh from the burning lake, and urging in council his fears of annihilation, is represented by MILTON as exclaiming:

“Sad cure! for who would leave,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
These thoughts that wander through eternity.”

Do you wish to be a good citizen? Then “get wisdom.” We do not live for ourselves alone. We have complex duties to perform to our kindred, neighbors, and country. Education,—that is, the cultivation of both the head and the heart,—enables us to understand the different relations of life, and to conduct ourselves properly in respect to them. This is especially necessary for every citizen of a free republican government. It was long doubted whether man was capable of self government. Ours was an experiment. It would seem that we have settled the question affirmatively, at least as to ourselves; but we must never forget, no citizen should ever allow himself to forget, that we have been able to do so, only by means of the virtue and intelligence of our people; and that our only hope of continued success must rest upon the continuance of these ennobling influences.—Without an intelligent people, a republican government is an absurd mockery. It is impossible to exercise, or

defend rights without a knowledge of them. It is worse than madness for a people to attempt self-government without intelligence. The history of the world will show, that the experiment must end in anarchy and blood. Let education go abroad in the land; let it spread over the country as the waters cover the face of the great deep. It is our bounden duty to preserve our institutions, and to bequeath them unimpaired to posterity. When we shall leave the unimpaired, hereditary freehold of liberty to our children, we shall have done but half our duty, unless our children shall possess both the intelligence to appreciate, and the spirit to maintain the sacred legacy.

Each of you may be called upon to discharge important offices, in connection with government. It is your duty to be prepared to discharge them well; and when you are called to enter upon them, to adhere to principle, obey the law, avoid faction, and in the service of your country be disinterested, frank and bold. If, however, it should be your lot, or choice not to enter the lists of ambition, or to strive for high and honorable position, still the even tenor of your way along the cool sequestered shades of life, will not be without its cares and its duties. You will often have occasion, as a good citizen, to cast your vote at the ballot box, and it will be your duty to yourselves and your country to exercise thoughtfully the great privilege of the elective franchise. This is a responsibility from which you can not escape by refusing your suffrage; for this would be, upon important occasions, a criminal disregard of your highest inter-

est, and an indifference akin to the spirit of him, who could fiddle whilst Rome was burning.

You may be called upon as a juror, to sit in judgment upon the dearest rights, the property, and the lives of your fellow citizens. There is no position more responsible than this. A juror is, for the occasion, a judge, whose voice is potent, and whose errors are often beyond correction. The jury may, in every case, render a general verdict, which involves the application of the law to the facts, as well as the decision of the facts themselves. The constitutional check which guards against the oppression of the accused, and the tenderness for life inherent in our law, render a verdict of acquittal in a criminal case altogether irreversible; so that in such cases, jurors are in effect judges of law and fact; and their judgment in favor of the accused is absolutely final. By their mistake innocent blood may be shed, but much more probably the guilty may be allowed to escape, to the great detriment of the community. Let no one think lightly of either the dignity, or the responsibility of this duty of the citizen, nor of the high qualities, moral and intellectual, required for its proper discharge.

You may be called upon to serve your country in the field—to shoulder your musket as a soldier in the ranks, or, as an officer, to lead your fellow citizens in defence of honor, home, family, and country. Our true policy corresponds with our desires for peace.—But we are not exempt from the misfortune of war more than other nations. We may be engaged in war, foreign or domestic, before the end of another

decade; and you are urged now to remember that we have no standing army, except a nucleus for rallying the militia—that we have no mercenary soldiers to fight our battles—no Pretorian bands to bear aloft the eagles of the Republic, and, at a distance upon the remote borders, to purchase security for the indolent, luxurious, and enervated citizen at home; but that in the emergency of war, you must rely upon yourselves—the citizen soldiery; and for the defence of your homes, and firesides, you must bare your own breasts to the storm of battle.

Do you wish to be a good man—understanding and discharging all the duties of life? Then, “with all thy getting get understanding.” To say of one that he is a good man is the highest praise that can be given to him. To be a good man, in the sense in which we have used the word, it is indispensable to have, at least so much education of both the head and the heart, as is necessary to understand all the relations of life, and to comprehend the fallen condition of man and the scheme of his redemption; and also to feel in the heart a meekness, humility and gratitude corresponding with such vast conceptions. The Protestant world maintains that the Holy Scriptures of the old and new Testament “are the only rule of faith and obedience,” and that, of themselves, they teach the way of salvation without the aid of any infallible interpreter. Education is, then, the priestess of the oracles; and without it, the Word, which was given to be “a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path,” may be so obscured and refracted by ignorance as to

lead into errors, whose end is destruction. Especially is it necessary that ministers of religion should be champions, and defenders of the faith,—filled with learning, various and profound—prepared to meet the assaults of infidelity, and to arrest the changes which time insidiously makes upon all things liable to the influence of human passions and motives.

It has been objected to the study of the sciences, that they have a tendency to engender religious scepticism. We are taught to believe that the foundation of our religion, the Scriptures, is true—nothing but truth—the very answer to the question of the Tetrarch of Palestine, when he asked, “what is truth?” We believe also that the object of all science, though on an humble scale, is to discover and teach truth.—It cannot be possible that the great source of truth—the great blaze of heavenly light, from which all these sciences are mere sparks of emanation—can be dimmed by scrutiny. It is not according to the nature of things, that truth should suffer from investigation. It rather solicits it, and is confirmed by it. Truth never wars with truth; but however different the subject in which it may be found—whether in the snow drop or the solar system—all are

“ But parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul.”

The origin and history of religion must be kept pure and undefiled. Without learning, the evidences and proofs of christianity, including the heroic lives of the martyrs, whose blood is the seed of the Church, would have been buried in oblivion; and the deeds

and story of him who came to preach redemption to the captive, and to proclaim peace on earth, and good will towards men, in all probability, would have been mingled and lost among the fabulous traditions of antiquity. If the light of learning were extinguished on the earth, it would not be long before the sublime system of our religion would degenerate into a superstition, as low and grovelling as any that ever defiled the annals of the world. Christianity and education have gone, and must still go, hand in hand. In these modern times, education, by purifying and enforcing the doctrines of a reformed Christianity, is but repaying a debt of gratitude which was incurred during the dark ages, when even the corrupt form of christianity which then prevailed covered and protected the seeds of learning from that fiery destruction which fell indiscriminately upon every thing outside of the precincts and cloisters of Holy Mother Church. Mr. MACAULAY, the eloquent historian of England, with all his prejudices, and just prejudices against the Church of the middle ages, has said: "The Church has many times been compared by divines, to that ark of which we read in the book of Genesis; but never was the resemblance more perfect, than during that evil time, when she alone rode, amidst darkness and tempest, on the deluge," beneath which all the great works of ancient power and wisdom lay entombed, bearing within her that feeble germ, from which a second and more glorious civilization was to spring."

In the United States there is no church establishment, or ecclesiastical authority provided by Govern-

ment. Public worship is maintained either by voluntary association and contributions, or by trusts and donations of a charitable origin. Government has been disconnected from religion here, not because of infidelity, nor because the religious sentiment is not well known to give strength to law, and permanency to order; but because matters of faith are too elevated and spiritual for human control, and because the diversity of religious creeds is so great as to render hopeless the task of giving authoritative sanction to one without necessarily and unjustly depressing others—all being equally sound and essential in the views of those who entertain them respectively. Such diversity of opinion, upon a subject so important to each personally, makes it improper that government should attempt to establish a standard. State policy must be confined to actions and the affairs of this life; for opinions and the concerns of another life, man owes no responsibility to his brother.

No want of religious instruction has resulted here from the absence of a Hierarchy established by law and supported by exacting one tenth of the fruits of the earth, or by taxes wrung from the hard earnings of the poor. Unlimited freedom of conscience renders our worship somewhat various and multiform, but for the very same reason it is fervent and sincere. Holy temples, dedicated to the worship of the living God, greet the eye in every corner of our land, which are vocal, at least one day in seven, with songs of heavenly praise. Every branch of the church relies for support entirely upon the zeal of its members, and

so secure is this reliance that we may safely affirm, as another has done, that "with us better provision is made for, and a greater portion of our people attend upon public worship, decently clad, well behaved and well seated, than of any other country of the civilized world."

The differences which exist amongst christians in respect to doctrine and church government, even when they agree in the essentials of christianity, have separated them into distinct societies, known as denominations. Some of these societies, integral portions of our people and mostly good citizens, appreciating the advantages of education, desiring that their children should be educated under wholesome, moral and religious influences, and preferring that these influences should partake of the tinge and character of their own peculiar tenets, have established amongst us schools and colleges. These institutions, though purely literary in their organization, from the circumstances of their origin, are called denominational. Each of these, the favorite of a particular portion of our people, sustained like the religious worship with which it is connected, by voluntary contributions, and diffusing mingled rays of light and heat, knowledge and morality over this our blessed and happy land, is a fit and proper object for approbation, encouragement, esteem and praise. As "the hills of Parnassus are proverbially barren," it is right that a hearty "*well-done*" should be accorded to those who incur cost and responsibility for the mental and moral culture of youth. It is all-important that we should

have institutions of learning accessible to all; whilst it is of less consequence what particular denominations of evangelical christians shall establish and govern them. It is better to have education tinged with denominational, or, if you please, sectarian influences, than not to have it at all. The principle of church association, which is so strong, should be encouraged to include education within the scope of its operations. Of this sentiment we should make the strongest of allies for the noblest of purposes.

This connection between religious denominations and general education must not, however, be pressed to the extreme opinion, that denominational schools and colleges should alone be encouraged, and that the whole duty of educating the people should be committed to those who direct and control them. The paramount importance to the State, of popular education, makes it proper to employ all worthy and available means for the attainment of an end so desirable. But the State knows no organized societies, further than to protect them in their rights. The members of all, as well as those who are members of none, are equally her citizens, and in the education of all her citizens she has an interest so great that it is necessary for her to preserve a control over the whole subject. This she must do to secure the symmetry of a general system; to put within the reach of all, at least the elements of knowledge; to place upon a sure foundation the highest, yet least popular branches of learning—those which are essential to progress but are not directly remunerative; and to afford

certainly, beyond the chance of accident, within her own borders, an opportunity for all her youth of competent means to obtain a liberal education at a Central Seminary, which may stimulate and elevate all others, and in which, without distinction of sect or section, all may feel the patriotic and humanizing influence of a common brotherhood.

It is gratifying to see the different denominations of christians taking up the subject of education, and undertaking to teach the mind, as well as the sentient and moral nature. We would say, in the language of one of the most distinguished men our country has produced: "This attention to the wants of the intellect and the soul, as manifested by the voluntary support of schools and colleges, of churches and benevolent institutions, is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the American people—not less strikingly exhibited in the new, than in the older settlements of the country. On the spot where the first trees of the forest were felled, near the log cabins of the pioneers, are to be seen rising together the church and the school house. So has it been from the beginning, and God grant that it may thus continue!

"On other shores, above their mouldering towns,
In sullen pomp, the tall Cathedral frowns;
Simple and frail, our lowly temples throw
Their slender shadows on the paths below;
Scarce steal the winds, that sweep the woodland tracks,
The larch's perfume from the settler's axe,
Ere, like a vision of the morning air,
His slight-framed steeple marks the house of prayer.
Yet Faith's pure hymn, beneath its shelter rude,
Breathes out as sweetly to the tangled wood,
As where the rays through blazing oriels pour
On marble shaft and tessellated floor.'"

Such and so great are some of the rewards of education. When we consider them, especially in connection with the view that our system of education must be mainly voluntary, how strongly are we impressed with a sense of the many obligations which the community owes to those who have founded, administered, and sustained this college! From a small beginning it has been carried forward through many embarrassments to the honorable position which it now occupies, of being one of the first literary institutions of the country.

The public is indebted to the State of South Carolina, the common mother of us all, for the encouraging sanctions given by law to this institution in every phase of its progress, from a common school to its present high rank, under the liberal charter of 1850, which was the first ever granted by the State to a denominational college.

The public is largely indebted to those liberal citizens, of whatever society or denomination they may be, who have voluntarily contributed their own means to rear this college and place it in our midst, where, like a great irrigating fountain, it pours forth over the country mingled streams of intelligence, morality and religion.

It would be difficult to tell how much the public is indebted to the Trustees of this institution. Doubtless they have all been contributors, and in that way are entitled to commendation in common with others; but they stand, and have stood in a much nearer relation to the college. They are not only contributors

and founders, but also governors—administrators of a particular fund, raised by a portion of the community for the good of the whole. Being men of distinction, they have brought the whole influence of their names, as well as giving their personal attention to maintain the college. This they have done successfully, through evil as well as through good report, and they must this day feel a proud satisfaction in contemplating the result of their labors.

But above all, the world can never know—for they are men who delight to do charity in secret—how much it is indebted to those who have had charge of the administrative department—the high priests, who have personally ministered at the altar, the President and Professors of this college. Possessing high character and liberal attainments, they are men, who could obtain employment anywhere; yet, actuated by a holy zeal for the cause, they have given up the world and its lucrative employments, to devote themselves, soul and body, to the performance of their duties connected with this college; expecting no other compensation, than a mere support derived from precarious eleemosynary contributions, and that higher reward, the proud and glorious consciousness of duty well performed.

And whilst upon this subject, nearly at the close of the exercises of another Commencement, amidst these associations, in this presence and in this Hall, memory calls to mind the familiar face of one who is no longer here. Since the last Commencement JAMES LINDSAY has departed from amongst us. In his sudden, unex-

pected and untimely death, his State has lost a good citizen, and his own cherished Institution a true friend and staunch supporter. He was born within a quarter of a mile of this place; here he was reared; here he exhibited the qualities which endeared him to all, and here, in the midst of his usefulness, he died. He was one of those who first suggested the establishment of the school here which prospered and resulted in Erskine College. He was a trustee of the academy first taught here. He was a trustee of the Clarke & Erskine seminary, as it was afterwards called, and finally of Erskine College from its foundation to the day of his death. His friendship for the institution was unwavering and his support generous and liberal. He delighted especially to be present on occasions such as this; and if the dead are permitted to visit again the scenes of their earthly labors, the spirit of JAMES LINDSAY is with us this day. Before he left us his long and faithful services to the college were recognized by his associates in toil; and when this building was erected, the spacious room which we now occupy, in compliment to him, was named LINDSAY HALL. Appropriate honor! May this edifice—a noble monument to his memory—long stand, the daily scene of literary exertion, and the annual theatre for literary display; and when it shall have crumbled into dust, may another, of still more magnificent proportions, rise in its stead, to which increasing thousands of *Alumni* may come up to celebrate, with grateful hearts, the festival of their beloved ALMA MATER.

